

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS

Newsletter of the

First Unitarian Church

Alton, Illinois

Pastor Amy Brooks

thisisamybrooks@gmail.com

Office Administrator Phillip Harris

Office phone: 618-462-2462

church@firstuualton.org

www.firstuualton.org



Congregation established 1836



Sunday Worship at 10:00 a.m. October 2019 Theme: "Sacrifice"

October 6th 10:00 a.m.

Presented by Michael Tarabulski.

Worship Associate: Robert Kokenyesi

RE for children/youth

October 13th 10:00 a.m.

Pastor Amy Brooks

Worship Associate: Joy Hoefft

Congregational Conversation at 11:15

October 20th 10:00 a.m.

"LOVE – Living Our Values Everyday."

*A conversation about First UU Alton and
Our Social Justice Priorities.*

Presented by John Herndon

Worship Associate: Peg Flach

RE for children/youth

October 27th 10:00 a.m.

Pastor Amy Brooks

Worship Associate: Robyn Berkley

**THE OCTOBER 27th SERVICE WILL BE HELD
AT THE MOOSE LODGE IN EDWARDSVILLE -
7371 Marine Road. THERE WILL BE NO
SERVICE AT CHURCH.** As a church fundraiser, after

the service we will be helping with the Moose Lodge's bimonthly chicken dinner. More details about the dinner (11 a.m. – 3 p.m.) are on page 2 of this newsletter.

A Letter to the Members of the First Unitarian Church of Alton

From *Lee Suarez, Church Board President*

Dear Congregation of the First Unitarian Church of Alton:

As incoming President, at the Annual Meeting in June 2019, I indicated that we needed to start a Congregational Conversation regarding where we house our Congregation and its activities. My research showed that we started this conversation around 2011. It's time to resume that conversation.

The expenses, the economy, the changing dynamics of church attendance are all factors in needing to have an Open Congregational discussion on this subject. The old methods are not sustainable, and WE must start the process NOW to build our Future. As UUs we rely on our diverse perspectives, because every voice matters. That's who we are. That's the way we will find our answers.

There will be many questions that need to be asked for us to come to some solution for our church building. Only by coming together can we find a viable and creative solution. (*Letter continued on page 2*)

(Letter continued from page 1)

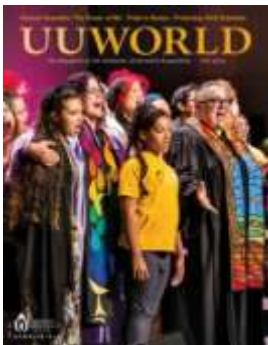
We are planning a series of meetings to continue what we didn't complete in 2011, and this time come to decisions and a path forward. We hope everyone can be part of these meetings even though we know that we all have busy schedules. We will make every effort to schedule multiple meetings in different time frames, and to be sure that everyone can follow our progress, we will be emailing (or snail mailing) informational papers to all throughout the process.

Please plan to come together in this effort to speak your truth and to listen to the truth as others see it. Together we can do what is best for the Congregation now and in the future.

We Value Your Involvement. Our first Congregational meeting to start this conversation will be on Sunday October 13th after the church service.

*Lee Suarez- President /
Char McAllister- President Elect*

Are You Receiving the UU World Magazine?



All members of the church should automatically be receiving the quarterly magazine published by the Unitarian Universalist Association. If you are not receiving this magazine please contact Phillip Harris in the church office (618-462-2462 or church@firstuualton.org) to have your name added to the

subscription list. The magazine is a "perk" of church membership and there is no charge to you.

**Church Grounds Cleanup
will be
Saturday October 12th &
Thursday October 24th
from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30
a.m.**



Come join us in keeping our Grounds maintained. Plans are to complete clearing the hillside by the Wuerker Room before cold weather arrives. After working in Grounds cleanup, we go out to lunch in the area, if you so desire.

Char McAllister, Grounds Maintenance



Sunday, October 27th OUTREACH SUNDAY in Edwardsville Winner, Winner, CHURCH & Chicken Dinner!

10:00 a.m. Our UU Service will be led by Rev. Amy Brooks and held at the **Edwardsville Moose Lodge**, 7371 Marine Road, Edwardsville, IL.



11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. As a CHURCH FUNDRAISER, we will help the Moose folk with their bimonthly chicken dinner. This dinner is open to the public: tickets are available at the door. Invite your friends and family to the 10:00 a.m. service and/or the chicken dinner!



A hearty meal is \$9 for adults: fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, corn, green beans, fresh salad. For children, the ticket cost is less, or free, depending upon the child's age. We will provide enhanced options for vegetarian and gluten-free friends, available on request. Eat in, or eco-friendly, compostable takeout containers are available. Scrumptious desserts available for purchase.

Volunteers are needed to ...

- Provide baked goods for bake sale
- Help serve, clean up, restock beverages, wash dishes. We need 5 people to help in 2 shifts: 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. If 3 hours is testing your comfort level, a one hour shift would be appreciated too!
- Plan and provide viable gluten-free and vegetarian options

Contact **Peg Flach** to volunteer to help or donate desserts. pegflach@gmail.com or by phone

YOUR BOARD IN ACTION



Through December, the Church Board will meet on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. The day of the week may change in 2020.

To see the latest news from the Board, check the Board's Bulletin Board in the Wuerker Room at Church.

For a list of all Board Members and people in Church Leadership positions see page 7.

4th Saturday Distribution Program Update



Our monthly distribution efforts serve those in our community in need of personal and household care products. Such items cannot be obtained through the government's SNAP program. Besides getting products from "I Support the Girls" in Edwardsville, we are now a Partner Agency with the St. Louis Area Foodbank and are able to get some items at low cost through them, but it's "hit and miss" as we are dependent on what sort of donations they receive, and since they focus on food, often the items we need aren't available. However in September we made two pickups of boxes of miscellaneous care products, most of which fit our inventory categories and the other items were put in the hospitality room "grab" box. In September we also provided a chili and cornbread lunch for those who came by.

Donations of products (e.g., laundry detergent, toilet paper, diapers, body wash, deodorant, socks, etc.) are always needed, as is ongoing financial support. Thanks to all of you who contribute in any way.

**Mary Johnson, Sabrina Trupia, Carol McGrew,
Robyn Berkley**



Are You Looking for UU books and gifts?

Check out "inSpirit the UU Book and Gift Shop" at

<https://www.uuabookstore.org/> or download the catalog at <http://www.uuabookstore.org/Assets/PDFs/InSpiritCatalog2019.pdf>



Upcoming Social Events for 2019

Saturday October 19th: Let's celebrate Oktoberfest together at the **Hofbrauhaus** in Belleville. Those who went

last month had a great time and we'd like to do it again. We have reserved tables starting at 4:00 p.m. You may order food and/or drinks individually. Be ready for clapping, singing along, dancing, swaying, and lots of laughs, as we enjoy a good time together. Contact Pat Moore ahead of time so that they can set up the right number of tables. You may call at home, email her at patjimmoore@charter.net, use Facebook UU Friends, or tell her in person. We will need a count by Oct. 15.

Saturday Nov. 9th: Join the Anna Ds for High Tea at noon in our own Kate Wuerker Room. The cost will be \$30, and space is limited to 40 lucky folks, so reserve with Peg Flach as soon as you can. You may invite guests. We will also be having a silent auction of Joan Hashimi's beautiful teapot collection, which her family generously donated to the church. Proceeds from the auction and tea will be donated to the church in Joan's memory. Let's dress in our hats and gloves and celebrate in true English Victorian fashion.

Thursday Nov. 28th: Our usual Thanksgiving Dinner together for those who aren't celebrating with family (or bring your family with you). We will be coordinating the potluck closer to the date, and we usually plan to eat at around 1:00-2:00 p.m. If you want to hang around after dinner, there will be plenty of time for conversation and/or games.

Sunday Dec. 1st: Regular potluck and annual "Deck the Halls" together. Let's spruce up the place for the holidays.

Saturday Dec 14th: You are cordially invited to the beautiful home of our President and Vice-President, Lee Suarez and Char McAllister, for an **Open House**. Time and details will come later, but save the date now.

Your social committee for 2019-2020:

Pat Moore, Robyn Berkley, Peg Flach, Jamie Lewis, Kayci Combs-Lueker and Mary Lu McManus

Let us know if you would like to join us. Do you like to plan parties, help with plans, or just clean up?

Pat Moore

**Photos from Sunday September 8th
Ingathering Roundup and Barbeque**



PITCH IN ... Wash, Dry and Put Away!

This really means that everyone has the responsibility to help keep our church home clean and neat, including taking a turn in doing the dishes after coffee hour or potluck. Perhaps it's as simple as washing your own cup/plate/utensils and putting them away or joining with others in the kitchen for lively conversation ... "many hands make light work."

***In Our
Church
Family***



Gerry Gilman has been moved to Meridian Village Care Center in Glen Carbon where he is receiving rehab.

Our condolences to **Carol McGrew** on the death of her father, Glenn David Bell, on August 27, 2019 in Stockton California. A memorial service was held at the First Unitarian Universalist Church in Stockton on September 3.

Willis McCoy, a former member of our church, known for his musical contributions to our congregation and to the community, died on Saturday, August 24, 2019 in Northfield Minnesota. A Memorial Service is tentatively planned for Friday, November 29, 2019 in Northfield. More details will be announced when available.



**News about
Our Extension Groups**

As the new church year gets underway, our Extension Groups will start up again.

The Glen Carbon / Edwardsville Group (Glen/Ed) will meet on the 2nd Saturday of each month (October 12th) at 4 p.m. at "A Holistic Approach," 88 South Main St. in Glen Carbon.

The North County gathering will be on the 3rd Saturday of each month (October 19th) at 10:30 a.m. in the chapel of Village North Retirement Center. The Center is at 11160 Village North Drive, little bit west of Christian Hospital off Dunn Road.

You are invited to choose to attend either of these two gatherings, no matter where you live. These meetings provide an opportunity for discussions, sharing, and a time to get to know each other better.

Next Newsletter Deadline: October 20, 2019

Send articles to Mary Johnson -
mejohanson@mindspring.com



Children's Religious Education



RE will begin on October 6th and will take place every other Sunday. All ages will be in one class.

In a meeting with members of the congregation and the kids it was decided to focus on the Seven UU

Principles. The curriculum we'll be using is called "Faithful Journeys" and includes stories, movement activities, and crafts as well as a time for sharing by the children and teachers what they did over the week that reflects one of the Principles.

In October, RE will held on October 6th and October 20th. In November the children will meet on November 3rd and November 17th in preparation for presenting a skit entitled "Thanksgiving Soup" at the November 24th Bread Service.

A big change in RE this year is that the children and youth will start in Emerson Place rather than the sanctuary. Most weeks they will go into the service during the *Time For All*, so they will be in the sanctuary for the end of the service. There may be a few weeks where that may not happen if the class is in the middle of a big discussion or project.

Please let me know if your child will not be there in November.

Joy Hoeft



Summary of the Church Board Meeting of September 10th, 2019

We hope you have noticed that we are posting meeting agendas before each Board meeting and Minutes several weeks later (after they are approved by the Board, generally an email process). If so, you may have noticed that the September 10, 2019 Agenda included a great deal of business. And I am pleased to let you know we made it through the entire agenda within our allotted two-hour time. (Hint, hint: Anyone who is REALLY curious can absolutely join us to see our collegial process in person.)

We began the meeting with a joyful item: this was the first meeting for Ben Hoeft and Isabella Navarre who are our Youth Representatives this year. And we were most grateful for their comments and perspective during a discussion of our social media presence, what's working, what could be improved.

Following a pattern Lee has set this year, we have been scheduling a deep dive into a single topic for the beginning of the meeting, and this month it was a review of 4th Saturday efforts by Sabrina Trupia and Mary Johnson. Details of that discussion are in the Minutes which will be posted soon.

We then spent a chunk of time with Phillip Harris, our Church Administrator, discussing financial issues. A copy of the summary report he provided will be attached to those same Minutes. (Seeing a pattern here? We would really like for you to locate those Minutes on the Board bulletin board and read them rather than depending on newsletter articles like this one.)

And I may have "buried the lead" in this article to see how many read this far. The Board at its retreat the previous Saturday discussed a new organizational structure; you guessed it, a copy will be at the back of those Minutes on the Bulletin Board. In summary, though, we clarified roles for the Board, the Minister and the Office Administrator. We collapsed many of the "committees" (most of which haven't been inhabited by volunteers in a long time) into three major areas:

Stewardship = the Endowment Fund and Budget Building, Grounds and Sunday Support = (the latter includes snow shoveling and kitchen clean-up)

Membership = Social Events, Social Action (4th Saturday), and Communications (Newsletter, Web Site, Social Media)

The Minister's primary areas of organizational responsibility are:

- Worship (and Worship Associates)
- Pastoral Care (guiding the Pastoral Care Committee as well as personal connection by the Minister)
- Religious Education (Children, Youth, and Adult)

We did a lot of Church business, listened carefully to information we need to know and laughed a lot. The only thing that could make Board meetings better is YOU – YOU learning about YOUR Church, YOU to volunteer in support of YOUR Church, YOU to make a difference in this world that only YOU can make.

See you in Church!

Sandy Shaner, Board Secretary



*You are invited to
Tea with the Anna Ds
on Saturday, November 9th
At High Noon
In the Kate Wuerker Room
First Unitarian Church, Alton IL*

*Suggested donation \$30 per reservation ***
Limited availability*

Plan to “tart up” in your best finery: hats, gloves, a tad of rouge and lipstick (or not)! Our tasty afternoon “tea” will include a goodly amount of tasty meal items as well as variety teas, special treats, entertainment ... and more! All genders welcome.

Also, in memory of long-time Anna Ds member Joan Hashimi, her family generously donated 25 of her lovely teapots to First UU ... as well as some other items special to Joan. We plan to keep a few teapots for church use and, utilizing a Silent Auction format, allow friends to attain wonderful keepsake items as a special remembrance of Joan.



We are taking limited reservations until October 31. Please contact Peg Flach by phone or at pegflach@gmail.com to confirm availability and for prepaid reservation details.

**** several donated reservations are available for anyone who finds the cost to be prohibitive: just make a reservation “as a friend of Anna Ds”!*

(continued on next column)

NEEDED for this event:

- *Several 2 or 3 tiered serving stands. (You know you have one hidden away somewhere: we’d like to borrow it!)*
- *Volunteers to help prep, cook, clean up (yes, we will be using our lovely china!).*

Contact Peg Flach for reservations, to volunteer, or to loan tiered serving stands.

INTEREST GROUPS:



**The Anna D. Sparks Alliance (aka Anna Ds)
will meet on October 3rd @ 11:30 a.m. at
Meridian Village**

Ginger McCall has invited the Anna Ds to meet for lunch at Meridian Village. The address is 27 Auerbach Place, Glen Carbon, IL 62034 (right off IL 157 near the Moto Mart station). The phone number is 618-288-3700.

Here’s the link to their web site if you’ve never been there - <https://www.lssliving.org/communities/meridian-village-glen-carbon-il/>.

The Dining Hall is inside the main (tall) building. We’ve always enjoyed the food there, and the only thing to remember is to **bring cash since they don’t handle credit cards AND there is no tipping.**

Please let me know by Monday, September 30 if you plan to attend. I’m looking forward to seeing you (and Ginger) there. **Sandy Shaner** wrgma2@gmail.com

**Men’s Monthly Lunch
October 10th @ 11:30 a.m.**

The men’s Lunch Bunch meets on the second Thursday of each month. Join us at the Best Buffet, 615 Wesley Dr. in Wood River. All men in our church are invited. For further information contact **Paul Hebert** pphebert@mail.com.

CHURCH LEADERSHIP as of October 2019

2019 - 2020

Board Members

Lee Suarez - President
Char McAllister - President-Elect
Chris Strangeman - Past President
Sandy Shaner - Secretary
Phil Embree - Treasurer
Aiden Crist - Member at Large
Jennifer Lewis - Member at Large
Isabella Navarre & Ben Hoeft - Youth Representatives

Building & Grounds

Co-Chair - Tom Cochran
Co-Chair - Michael Tarabulski
Grounds - Char McAllister

Endowment Fund

Jerry Johnson
Tracey Howe-Koch

Fund Raising

Co-Chair - Peg Flach
Co-Chair - vacant

Membership

Co-Chair - Mary Weber
Co-Chair - vacant

Newsletter

Mary Johnson

Pastoral Care Associates

Rev. Amy Brooks
Dee Evans
Ruth Maskow
Pat Murrell
Sandy Shaner
Mary Weber

Pledge Drive

Char McAllister

RE Council

Joy Hoeft
Jennifer Lewis
Kayci Combs-Lueker

Social Events Coordinator

Co-Chair - Pat Moore
Co-Chair - vacant

Social Justice

Co-Chair - John Herndon
Co-Chair - Ed Navarre

Social Media

Nathan Brown

Sunday Support Services

Paula Moore
Carol McGrew

Worship Associates

Chair – Amy Brooks
Robyn Berkley
Peg Flach
John Herndon
Joy Hoeft
Tracey Howe-Koch
Jerry Johnson
Robert Kokenyesi
Michael Tarabulski

4th Saturday Distribution Program

Mary Johnson
Sabrina Trupia
Carol McGrew
Robyn Berkley

If you have questions, concerns, or helpful ideas regarding any of the church activity areas given above, please get in touch with one of the people listed in your area of interest.



The Alton Overnight Warming Centers Initiative is a collaborative approach to addressing a critical need for persons experiencing homelessness during the coldest nights of the year. There are public warming centers during the day but there is nowhere to go overnight. In an effort to seek safety and connection for our neighbors this initiative seeks to pull churches, nonprofits, county officials and community members together in order to provide sanctuary to those who need it most. Several potential host sites have been identified to be used on a rotating basis. There will be training for volunteers on October 19th at Deliverance Temple (1125 E 6th St. in Alton). For more information send an email to altonwarmingcenters@gmail.com.

Next Newsletter Deadline: October 20, 2019

Send articles to Mary Johnson -
mejohanson@mindspring.com